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IRREPRESSIBLES.

By Mrs Lynn Linton.

Who does not know those irrepressible folk who have no respect for the decencies of self-control, no regard for the more tender restraints of delicacy, no careful hold on that golden treasure of Silence wherein lies Wisdom? As impervious to hints as is that proverbial blind horse to the wink and the nod, they take their headlong way as though they were so many wild asses of the desert, unbitted, unbridled, unguided. Blundering and obtuse, they crash into the secret closets where the family skeletons are housed. Open-mouthed and without thought, they give to the world at large the benefit of their discovery, and drag out into the light of day those grinning atomies which they found comfortably covered up under the dust of a generation, undisturbed and forgotten, till now they have been resurrected and set a-dancing once more in the open. Not so much inquisitive as without foresight or perspicuity, they tear off the pretty little silken bandages deftly fashioned to look like ornament, and come upon the sore they were designed to conceal; which sore, because of the natural hardness of their hands and the clumsiness of their touch, they rasp and rub till the poor sufferer weeps and winces. And all this comes from that want of sympathetic imagination, that denseness of perception, which is characteristic of the tribe, and in no wise from evil-heartedness or bad intention. For these Irrepressibles are often as kind-hearted as they are clumsy; and when they subject their friends to torture, do so with no more malice than there is in the coping-stone when it falls on the head of the passer-by, and smashes him into eternity.

Of the faintest echo of that proverb which forbids one to speak of a hempen rope in the house where a man has been hanged, our irrepressible friends are totally ignorant. Do they know a family whereof some degenerate member has gone wrong—perhaps suffered the penalty due, say, to forgery, embezzlement, fraudulent dealing with trust-money or the like? All in good faith, and quite oblivious of the painful associations connected and aroused, they will go into a minute discussion on the last analogous case, disputing the evidence, descanting on the enormity of the crime, delivering themselves of their opinions as to the punishment due for such an offence—opinions sure to be Draconian in their severity and Rhadamanthine in their inflexibility. In vain a more enlightened friend hints to them to desist. In vain a more nimble wit strives to turn this dangerous flow of talk into safer channels. The Irrepressibles blunder on, like bulls making havoc of the Dresden and the Sèvres, lacerating the hearts they would not willingly have hurt for all the broad lands of England. They see nothing, suspect nothing, have no consciousness of sin and no thought of wrong-doing. When they are trounced by those more understanding ones, and shown the enormity of their blunder, they are all in amazed wonder how they ever got into such a hole. They knew, but they did not remember, they say; and as for the hints and warnings so subtilely conveyed, they understood them no more than the wool-gathering whist-player understands the game when he does not see the call for trumps, or read the significance of a ten played third hand.

The Irrepressibles rush into friendships as into enmities, without solid grounds and on the principle of the pyramid built point downwards. Slaves to their emotions as they are, they give their very souls to the treacherous and unloving, offering their hearts to all the daws about. Unlike the self-centred and egoistic, who have no more spontaneity than an iceberg has of flaming fire, the Irrepressibles are spontaneous from head to heel—thoughts, actions, feelings, all bubbling to the surface like one of those inexhaustible springs which must find an outlet no matter what may oppose. Love at first sight is their constant experience; rash marriage is their general portion; early

disgust and life-long consciousness of the mistake they have made follow on the heels of their inconsiderateness; and all the world is then taken into their confidence, and made free of their self-inflicted sufferings. They can no more repress the desire to tell out their woes than they could control the impulses which led to them. The one is but the converse of the other, even as Love's shadow is Hate. As with their troubles within the home, so is it with their enmities, their quarrels, their misunderstandings without. When an Irrepressible is in the midst of a social war, he rushes hot-foot to all his friends and associates, making his own case good—till the other side is heard. That other side generally puts a different complexion on the face of the matter; and perhaps the irate Irrepressible himself is proved in the wrong—shown to be the one to whom is owing the whole germination, growth, flowering, and seeding of the poison-plant. This is sure to be so when he is a dour, susceptible, self-tormenting person, who sees insults where none were meant, and slights in the airiest nothings. For this sullen kind of irrepressibility is as true to life as the more bright and bubbling, the more buoyant and gassy. And when we have dealings with these uneasy-tempered and suspicious Irrepressibles, we have a very fair notion of one of the pains of that Malebolge where sinful souls expiate in torments the crimes committed in the flesh.

Irrepressible are the fond—and foolish—hopes which have no root-work in probability, but which are just possible without miracle, and no more than this. As irrepressible are those equally foolish fears which see dangers where none exist, and destruction in the smallest risk. Certain people, more especially women, go through life in one unending terror of evil dreams and fatal results. When they drive, their horses will run away, lame them for life, and smash the carriage to smithereens. When they walk, every honest old Joe going to and from his work is a footpad with a hedge-stake beneath his rags. When they sit at home, they are always smelling fire and hearing burglars. When they travel by rail, they make more sure of an accident than of safe arrival at their destination. Fear dominates them at all four corners. In the twilight, ghostly visitants pass and waver in the cold gray air; at night, 'airy voices syllable men's names' and call to them from the depths of the unseen world. When the morning breaks, it brings presage of disaster during the day:—and all this misery is as uncontrollable as the laughter of a happy child, as the rain of a tropical sky, as the frost of the icebound north. Governed by their fears, they suffer in their self-made, unsubstantial and non-existent Inferno, just as their brothers and cousins rejoice in the fool's paradise where they have taken up their lodging—paying the rent by their rationality and good sense.

Irrepressible in familiarities, so are these folk in discussion. Nothing stops them when they have a mind to talk, and for no one's opinions have they respect or consideration. At the table of a Home Ruler they will bring forward their strongest Imperialist views; at that of a staunch Conservative they will advocate Home Rule and down with the House of Lords, one man one vote, and a fig for that stake which once represented stability. They talk loudly and they talk lustily. The bated breath and the courteous phrase have no place in their controversial armoury. Had they more reticence of manner they must needs have less irrepressibility of nature—again that flame of fire not being the natural product of an iceberg. As with politics, so with religion. An Irrepressible as a religionist is a fanatic pure and simple. A second Peter, he carries the Fiery Cross through dale and hamlet, and on to the tops of the far-reaching hills; or, as Jenny Geddes, he flings his 'creepie stool' at the head of the officiating minister, and blasphemes such doctrines as he may not like. If he does not approve of what he hears, irrepressible and inconsiderate, he lashes out in disdainful contradiction, as if he were the only person whose opinions had to be consulted, and the one whose inalienable possession was the Key of Truth. Whatever is different from his creed is wrong, and whatever he thinks wrong he attacks. His acquaintance is an embarrassment at all times, but never so much so as when he seeks to convert and to controvert, to proselytise and to turn from the error of their pernicious ways those who have been born and bred in their present faith, and those who have thought out the matter from end to end and stand where they do by force of reasoned conviction. The Irrepressibles reck little of these reasoned convictions. Their sole desire is to press their own views, no matter at what cost or through whose pain; and when they have made some angry, others perplexed, and all uncomfortable, they think they have done their duty and deserved well of their generation. What a weariness to the flesh are these irrepressible proselytisers when met with, say in a hotel, or at a friend's house, where you cannot easily escape! Are they Nonconformists, and is there a Romanist among them? Never do they let the sins and errors of the Elder Church fall into oblivion for want of routing out and setting in array, like so many coco-nuts to be knocked down by a skilful hand. Are they Romanists in the midst of Protestants? Then do they insist on the claims of Authority, Tradition, Succession, denying the validity of all Orders outside their own pale, and refusing to the poor shivering souls before them so much as a shred of the wedding garment. So with all the rest—that wise liberality which allows to others the freedom and sanctity of conscience it takes for itself having no place in the Irrepressible's repertory of virtues.

The Irrepressibles have no delicacy. We may take that as an axiom proved and sure. If your nearest and dearest have offended their susceptibilities, they will abuse them to your face with unstinted measure and unrestricted breadth. In vain your show of displeasure by glacial reserve or warm defence. Your Irrepressible cares nought for either attitude. He is as an elephant crushing down the young saplings—as a hard-headed dunce chastised by a peacock's feather. Full of his own wrongs real or fancied,

fevered by that false wrath which comes from personal antipathy, they one and all pound away at that Kit of their present enmity; and no bridle fashioned by man or morality, by good manners or consideration, restrains them in their onslaught. Perhaps the most embarrassing position that a man can be placed in is when one of this blatant, noisy, and intemperate tribe falls foul of a near relation who, by his account, is nothing less than a scoundrel, while he himself is Injured Innocence in person and a spotless victim of perfidy and villainy.

On a line with him, if at a slightly different angle, stand those blunderers whose social mistakes are among the stock chestnuts of anecdotists. 'That fat frowsy woman'—who is your wife; 'that painfully hideous fool'—who is your daughter; your 'fishy-eyed' husband; your 'goat-like' father. Who does not know the whole roll-call of social enormities committed by those headlong Irrepressibles who neither read faces nor understand accents? Indeed, they understand nothing of all which others take as their guiding principles through life. They have no perception of the true shape or colour of the circumstances in the midst of which they stand, no prevision of consequences, no thought of the future. Not looking before they leap, with shut eyes, and all unconscious where they are going or what they shall find on the other side, they take the jump, and plunge into that caldron of boiling water standing ready for them, or into the social analogue of that Serbonian bog 'where armies whole have sunk.' Sometimes, indeed, they suffer a punishment so severe as to prove their virtual redemption. For like the child who has burnt itself, and thus learns not to play again with fire, so do the Irrepressibles at last learn a little caution and some reserve. An action for libel, for instance, is a famous bridle for unruly impulses—as good as the old 'branks' which tamed the ancient scold. And when our Irrepressibles not only lose friends and lovers, offend relations, and are cut out of wills because of their indiscreet utterances, but also have to stand in the defendant's place in court, be severely lectured by the judge and cast in damages besides, then maybe they 'tak' a thocht and mend,' to which a worse creature than they was once so powerfully entreated.

AN ELECTRIC SPARK.*

CHAPTER XXIII.—BRANT STRIKES FIRST BLOW.

'HAH! that's right, boy; glad you've come,' cried the doctor one evening. 'Sit down. Tell me how things are going. You look tired as a dog.'

'I am, sir.'

'Then take a glass of that Burgundy. It will put life into you. By the way, I called at South Audley Street.'

'Indeed? How was Miss Bryne?'

'Bad: very bad indeed.'

'Ill? I am very sorry,' said Wynyan.

'Terribly bad. Her old complaint: Endoza, sir,' said the doctor grimly. 'Well, don't you want to know how any one else is?'

'No,' said Wynyan coldly.

'More fool you. But I say, my boy, what the dickens have you been about there?'

'Nothing, sir, but behaved like a weak idiot. Come, you wanted to know about the business.'

'So I do, directly, But look here: you must have said or done something to upset little Rénée.'

'I have been hard at work night and day,' said Wynyan, affecting not to follow his friend's words.

'I was talking about South Audley, not about George Street, sir. You must have given her some terrible offence.'

'I kept the men at work two whole nights,' continued Wynyan.

'I introduced your name three times over; and, by George, sir, she nearly snapped my head off,' said the doctor.

'And in another fortnight, doctor, I shall have something to show the government which will keep them quiet for a time.'

'I said that you were my friend, and I should mention your name as often as I liked.'

'And then it will give me an opportunity to get matters more ahead.'

'I never thought that she had so much firmness in her. Look here, Wynyan, my boy, what have you done?'

'And by taking on a couple of dozen extra hands, we may recover a good deal of lost ground.'

'It must have been something that turned her dead against you, my boy, for she finished at last with her face flaming, and by telling me that she must request me to cease my visits.'

'How could you be so foolish, doctor?' cried Wynyan angrily. 'I must beg that you will not meddle in my affairs if you desire that we should remain friends.'

'Humph! Between the two stools, et cetera.'

'Keep to your medicine, sir,' said Wynyan, with his eyes flashing, 'or to your own love affairs.'

'Thank you, my boy, thank you. Go on. Only remember that the moral influences the physical a great deal. All right: I'm not offended.'

'No, sir, but I am,' said Wynyan hotly; 'and I wish you good-evening.'

He strode out of the room, there was a faint sound of rustling in the umbrella-stand, and directly after the heavy closing of the door.

'Why, hang him! he has actually gone!' cried the doctor, who had sat listening: and springing to his feet, he rushed into the hall shouting 'Here, hi! Wynyan! Don't be a fool. Come back.' But he was too late. Wynan had gone, jumped into the first cab, and ordered the man to drive him home.

'Bah! It's a stupid thing this love,' growled the doctor, as he returned to his chair. 'Makes people as disagreeable as children getting over the measles.'

He poured out a glass of wine, sipped, spat it out, and set the glass down.

'Bah! Corked!' he exclaimed, and he threw

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his half-smoked cigar into the fire. 'I've a good mind to devote the rest of my days to invention. Why not a medicine—patent medicine with the government stamp? Drops to be taken at the first symptoms of a love-fit coming on. Consequence, utter forgetfulness and indifference. That would be the thing. Well, I think I'll go to bed.'

But Paul Wynyan did not go to bed for some hours. He sat up thinking, trying hard to come to the conclusion that nature delighted in making her worst poisons the most pleasing to the eye, and asking himself why it was that, knowing what he did, he should still suffer cruelly and think of Rénée as she was in the past.

The consequence was that he was dull and heavy when he called in at the office next morning on his way to the works, and waited for about half an hour to see Brant and report the progress at the factory.

But Brant had not arrived at half-past ten, and after a few words with Hamber, who was eager to know how things were going, he went on to the works, saying that he would be back at two, and wanted to see Mr Brant Dalton.

Punctual to the minute, he was back in high spirits, for the men were making excellent progress, and, wrapped up as he was now in the interest of the work, he felt more cheerful; and, telling himself that work was after all the best cure for a mind diseased, and that he must find satisfaction and rest in carrying out the wishes of his old friend, he hurried upstairs to go and see Brant in a more friendly spirit than had existed in his breast for some time past.

On reaching the room, he noticed that the clerks were whispering together and that Hamber was not in his place: but his coming had the effect of setting every one busy again, and he addressed the junior.

'Mr Brant Dalton returned, Gibbs?' he said.

'Yes, sir. Mr Hamber is with him.'

'Something wrong,' thought Wynyan, impressed by the young man's manner; and after a moment's hesitation he went to the principal's room.

'Are you engaged—can you see me?' he asked.

'Oh yes, come in, Mr Wynyan,' cried Brant hurriedly. 'No, don't go, Hamber: you had better stay.'

Wynyan looked from one to the other sharply after closing the door, to read blank despair in Hamber's countenance, and a peculiar troubled nervous expression in Brant's.

'What is it?' said Wynyan. 'Something wrong?' And the first thing which occurred to him as he recalled the hurried gossiping of the clerks and draughtsmen, was that some defalcation had been discovered.

'Wrong? Yes!' cried Brant, after a gasp. 'Here, read this.'

He handed a great official-looking envelope to him; and as he took it Wynyan saw that it bore a government seal.

'Oh, don't you be uneasy about that,' he cried; and there was exultation in his tones. 'I came to talk it over with you.'

'Ah, then you knew?' cried Brant excitedly; and old Hamber caught at the back of a chair to support himself.

'Knew? Of course they had good reason to complain, but I can soon silence them now.'

'You hear, Hamber,' said Brant hoarsely. 'He says he knew all about it.'

'Of course,' cried Wynyan; 'and I tell you I am ready now to show their committee enough to satisfy them of our *bona fides*, and let them see that in a very short time longer we shall have made up for lost time.'

'You—you had better read this communication, Mr Wynyan,' said Brant huskily, but trying to speak in a cold formal tone.

'Certainly,' said Wynyan; and he drew out a brief document bearing an official stamp, read a few lines, started violently, and then looked from one to the other, seeing Brant gazing significantly at the old clerk, who was now ghastly and trembling violently.

'Great Heavens!' gasped Wynyan; 'what does this mean?'

'Have you read all, Mr Wynyan;' said Brant coldly.

'No, not yet. There was matter enough to stun in the first lines.'

'Yes,' said Brant; 'matter enough to stun. Go on, sir, please.'

Wynyan read to the end—it did not take long, and then folded the paper, replaced it slowly in the envelope, and stood with his eyes flashing and brow contracted, tapping his left hand with the edge of the document.

'Their lordships request an immediate explanation,' said Wynyan, quoting from the missive.

'Yes; an immediate explanation, Mr Wynyan. You read—the plans and drawings have been copied, stolen, and sold to some foreign government, ruining the invention and exposing the firm to a dishonourable charge, and immediate demand for a restitution of the heavy sum paid down, and goodness knows what beside.'

'Perhaps a prosecution for swindling—getting money under false pretences,' said Wynyan bitterly.

'There—there must be some mistake, gentlemen,' said Hamber feebly.

'Mistake!' roared Brant. 'Mistake: does that look like a mistake. Curse the invention! I wish I had never heard it named. My poor uncle must have been mad.'

'Leave your uncle's name out of this discussion, sir, if you please,' said Wynyan sternly.

'No, sir, it cannot be left out of this business,' cried Brant excitedly. 'Do you grasp, Mr Wynyan, what this means?'

'I do, sir, fully. The government would not make such a charge without good grounds. It means ruin and disgrace.'

'Worse, sir!' cried Brant.

'Stop a moment,' said Wynyan; and he walked back to see that both doors were closed. 'It will be time enough for the whole world to know when it gets in the papers—if it is not already on its way to their offices. Now, if you please. You were saying that it is worse. There is no worse thing could happen to us than ruin and dishonour, for death would be a relief.'

'I say, sir,' cried Brant, who had wound himself up to speak; 'and I will say it in spite of your interruptions and evasions'——

Wynyan started, for there was something in his rival's tones which suggested a foul blow.

'I say,' cried Brant, 'do you know what this means, and you try to shift aside my words. It means that we must have a traitor in the camp.'

'Of course,' said Wynyan sternly.

'And that traitor must be Hamber, me, or you.'

'I swear before my Creator, gentlemen, that I am innocent,' cried the old clerk wildly. 'Oh, Mr Wynyan, sir, for Heaven's sake, don't you think I would do such a thing.'

Wynyan caught one of the hands extended to him, and clapped his left on the trembling old man's shoulder.

'You, Hamber!' he cried, with a smile. 'You? Hold your tongue, you foolish old man; who could suspect you of such a thing?'

'Then, traitor,' roared Brant furiously, 'it must have been you.'

Wild with indignant fury, Wynyan raised his hand to strike the speaker down, but Hamber clung to him.

'Don't—don't do that, sir,' he cried. 'Mr Wynyan, sir, no one living could believe that lie!'

'Thank you, Hamber,' said Wynyan, calming down as rapidly as he had flashed into rage; and then facing round again, as Brant spoke once more, in a state of wild excitement, his hand to his brow, and as if trying to recall thoughts which were escaping him.

'Ah, I remember now,' he cried. 'What do they say—copied and supplied to a foreign government? Mr Hamber, I call you to bear me witness about those plans.'

'I assure you, sir, I'——

'Listen to what I say,' cried Brant. 'You recollect my words to you when Mr Wynyan brought back those plans after taking them away.'

Wynyan started violently.

'I said to you, "He did not take them away to copy, did he?"'

'I—I—hardly'—— stammered Hamber.

'Answer my question, sir,' roared Brant in the tones of a bullying cross-examining barrister with a losing case.

'Yes, sir; you did say something of the kind,' faltered the old man piteously.—'But, Mr Wynyan, I assured him that such a thing was impossible.'

'Silence!' cried Brant, with a malignant glittering in his eyes. 'That will do, sir. We know now. The case is plain enough. Government may do its worst, for not a step will I stir. Pah! to think we should be brought to this.—Well, sir,' he added sharply, 'is it to be South America or Spain? I should advise you to try one of them while your shoes are good. I don't want to be dragged up as a witness at your trial. What do you mean to do?'

'I shall see,' said Wynyan, looking the scoundrel down; 'that remains to be proved.'

'Of course. It is nothing to me, so long as we are cleared here from the presence of a thief.'

'Thief!'

But once more old Hamber clung to the upraised arm, and Brant had no need to use the poker which he had seized in his defence.

THE STORY OF THE SEWING-MACHINE.

ALTHOUGH the sewing-machine has not put an end to the slavery of the needle, and although 'The Song of the Shirt' may be heard to the accompaniment of its click and whirr, just as it was to the 'stitch, stitch' of Tom Hood's time, yet has it unquestionably come as a boon and a blessing to man—and woman. Its name now is legion, and it has had so many inventors and improvers that the present generation is fast losing sight of its original benefactors. Indeed, we take the sewing-machine to-day as an accomplished fact so familiar as to be commonplace. And yet that fact is a product of as moving a history as any in the story of human invention.

It is the growth of the last half-century, prior to which the real sewing-machine was the heavy-eyed, if not tireless, needlewoman, whose flying fingers seemed ever in vain pursuit of the flying hours. Needlework is as old as human history, for we may see the beginnings of it in the aprons of fig-leaves which Mother Eve sewed. What instrument she used we know not, but we do know from Moses that needles were in use when the tabernacle was built. Yet, strange to say, it was not until the middle of last century that any one tried to supersede manual labour in the matter of stitching. It is said that a German tailor named Charles Frederick Weisenthal was the first to attempt it, but for hand-embroidery only—with a double-pointed needle eyed in the middle. This was in 1755, and fifty years later, one John Duncan, a Glasgow machinist, worked out Weisenthal's idea into a genuine embroidering machine, which really held the germ of the idea of the 'loop-stitch.' But neither of these was a sewing-machine, and before Duncan's invention some one else had been seized with another idea.

This was a London cabinet-maker called Thomas Saint, who in or about 1790 took out a patent for a machine for sewing leather, or rather for 'quilting, stitching, and making shoes, boots, splatterdashes, clogs, and other articles.' This patent, unfortunately, was taken out along with other inventions in connection with leather, and it was quite by accident that, some eighty years later, the specification of it was discovered by one who had made for himself a name in connection with sewing-machines. Even the Patent Office did not seem to have known of its existence, yet now it is clear enough that Thomas Saint's leather-sewing-machine of 1790 was the first genuine sewing-machine ever constructed, and that it was on what is now known as the 'chain-stitch' principle. Rude as it was, it is declared by experts to have anticipated most of the ingenious ideas of half a century of successive inventors, not one of whom, however, could in all human

probability have as much as heard of Saint's machine. This is not the least curious incident in the history of the sewing-machine.

In Saint's machine the features are—the overhanging arm, which is the characteristic of many modern machines; the perpendicular action of the Singer machine; the eye-pointed needle of the Howe machine; the pressure surfaces peculiar to the Howe machine; and a 'feed' system equal to that of the most modern inventions. Whether Saint's machine was ever worked in a practical workshop or not, it was unquestionably a practicable machine, constructed by one who knew pretty well what he was about, and what he wanted to achieve.

Now note the date of Thomas Saint's patent (1790), and next note the date of the invention of Barthelmy Thimonnier, of St Etienne, who is claimed in France as the inventor of the sewing-machine. In 1830, Thimonnier constructed a machine, principally of wood, with an arrangement of barbed needles, for stitching gloves, and in the following year he began business in Paris, with a partner, as an army clothier. The firm of Thimonnier, Petit, & Co., however, did not thrive, because the *ouvriers* thought they saw in the principal's machine an instrument destined to ruin them; much as the Luddites viewed steam machinery in the cotton districts of England. An idea of that sort rapidly germinates heat, and Thimonnier's workshop was one day invaded by an angry mob, who smashed all the machines, and compelled the inventor to seek safety in flight. Poor Thimonnier was absent from Paris for three years, but in 1834 returned with another and more perfect machine. This was so coldly received, both by employers and workmen in the tailoring trade, that he left the capital, and, journeying through France with his machine, paid his way by exhibiting it in the towns and villages as a curiosity. After a few years, however, Thimonnier fell in with a capitalist who believed in him and his machine, and was willing to stake money on both. A partnership was entered into for the manufacture and sale of the machine, and all promised well for the new firm, when the Revolution of 1848 broke out, stopped the business, and ruined both the inventor and the capitalist. Thimonnier died in 1857 in a poorhouse, of a broken heart.

This French machine was also on the chain-stitch principle, but it was forty years later than Saint's. In between the two came, about 1832, one Walter Hunt, of New York, who is said to have constructed a sewing-machine with the lock-stitch movement. Some uncertainty surrounds this claim, and Elias Howe is the person usually credited with this important, indeed invaluable, invention. Whether Howe had ever seen Hunt's machine, we know not; but Hunt's machine was never patented, seems never to have come into practical working, and is, indeed, said to have been unworkable. There is, besides, in the Polytechnic at Vienna, the model of a machine, dated 1814, constructed by one Joseph Madersberg, a tailor of the Tyrol, which embodies the lock-stitch idea—working with two threads. But this also was unworkable, and Elias Howe has the credit of having produced the first really practical lock-stitch sewing-machine.

His was a life of vicissitude and of ultimate triumph, both in fame and fortune. He was born at a small place in Massachusetts in 1819, and as a youth went to Boston, there to work as a mechanic. While there, and when about twenty-two years old, the idea occurred to him at his work of passing a thread through cloth and securing it on the other side by another thread. Here we perceive the germ of the lock-stitch—the two threads. Howe began to experiment with a number of bent wires in lieu of needles, but he lacked the means to put his great idea to a thorough practical test. Thus it slumbered for three years, when he went to board and lodge with an old school-fellow named Fisher, who, after a while, agreed to advance Howe one hundred pounds in return for a half-share in the invention should it prove a success. Thus aided, in 1845 Howe completed his first machine, and actually made himself a suit of clothes with it; and this would be just about the time of Thimonnier's temporary prosperity in alliance with the capitalist, Mogrini.

Feeling sure of his ground, Howe took bold steps to 'boom' his invention. He challenged five of the most expert sewers in a great Boston clothing factory to a sewing match. Each of them was to sew a certain strip of cloth, and Howe undertook to sew five strips, torn in halves, before each man had completed his one strip. The arrangements completed, the match began, and to the wonder of everybody, Howe finished his five seams before the others were half done one seam. But murmurs instead of cheers succeeded the victory. He was angrily reproached for trying to take the bread out of the mouth of the honest working-man, and a cry was raised among the workers (as it has been heard time and again in the history of industrial development) to smash the machine. Howe, indeed, had much difficulty in escaping from the angry mob, with his precious machine under his arm.

In Howe's experience we thus see one parallel with Thimonnier's; but there was another. The American was quite as poor and resourceless as the Frenchman, and the next step in Howe's career was that he went on tour to the country fairs to exhibit his machine for a trifling fee, in order to keep body and soul together. People went in flocks to see the thing as a clever toy, but no one would 'take hold' of it as a practical machine. And so, in despair of doing any good with it in America, Elias Howe, in 1846, sent his brother to England to see if a market could not be found for the invention there. The brother succeeded in making terms with one William Thomas, staymaker, in Cheapside, London, and he sent for Elias to come over.

The price to be paid by Thomas for the patent was two hundred and fifty pounds, but Howe was to make certain alterations in it so as to adapt it to the special requirements of the purchaser. While engaged in perfecting the machine he was to receive wages at the rate of three pounds per week, and this wage he seems to have received for nearly two years. But he failed to achieve what Thomas wanted, and Thomas, after spending a good deal of money over the experiments,

abandoned the thing altogether. Howe was thus a-strand again, and he returned to America as poor as ever, leaving his machine behind him in pawn for advances to pay his passage home. And yet there were 'millions in it.'

This was in the year 1849, and just about the time when Howe was returning to America, another American, named Bostwich, was sending over to England a machine which he had invented for imitating hand-stitching, by means of cog-wheels and a bent needle. And a year or two after Howe's return, one Charles Morey, of Manchester, attempted to carry out the same stitch on a somewhat different plan, but failed to find sufficient pecuniary support. Indeed, poor Morey had a tragic end, for, taking his machine to Paris in the hope of finding a purchaser there, he incurred some debt which he could not pay, and was clapped into the Mazas prison. While there he inadvertently broke the rules, and was shot by the guard for failing to reply to a challenge which he did not understand.

When Howe got back to the United States he found a number of ingenious persons engaged in producing or experimenting in sewing-machines, and some of them were trenching on his own patent rights. He raised enough money, somehow, to redeem his pawned machine in England, and then raised actions against all who were infringing it. The litigation was tremendous both in duration and expense, but it ended in the victory of Elias Howe, to whom, by the finding of the court, the other patentees were found liable for royalty. It is said that Howe, who as we have seen left London in debt, received, before his patent expired in 1867, upwards of two million dollars in royalties alone.

But ingenious men were now busy in both hemispheres in perfecting what up till about fifty years ago was regarded as nothing better than a clever toy. Besides Morey, the Manchester man we have mentioned, a Huddersfield machinist, named Drake, brought out a machine to work with a shuttle. About the same time, or a little later, a young Nottingham man, named John Fisher, constructed a machine with a sort of lock-stitch movement, which he afterwards adapted to a double loop-stitch. But Fisher's machine was intended rather for embroidering than for plain sewing.

Passing over some minor attempts, the next great development was that of Allen Wilson, who, without having heard either of Howe's or of any other machine, constructed one in 1849, the design of which, he said, he had been meditating for two years. His first machine had original features, however much it may have been anticipated in principle by Howe's patent. In Wilson's second design, a rotary hook was substituted for a two-pointed shuttle, and by other improvements he achieved a greater speed than had been attained by other inventors. Later still he added the 'four-motion feed,' which is adopted on most of the machines now in general use.

This idea was an elaboration of a principle which seems to have first occurred to the unfortunate Morey. In Morey's machine there was a horizontal bar with short teeth, which caught the fabric and dragged it forward as the stitches were completed. It took nearly thirty years, however, to evolve the perfect 'feed' motion out of Morey's first crude germ.

While Wilson was working away, perfecting his now famous machine, an observing and thoughtful young millwright was employed in a New York factory. One day a sewing-machine was sent in for repairs, and after examining its mechanism, this young man, whose name was Isaac Singer, confidently expressed his belief that he could make a better one. He did not propose either to appropriate or abandon the principle, but to improve upon it. Instead of a curved needle, as in Howe's and Wilson's machines, he adopted a straight one, and gave it a perpendicular instead of a curvular motion. And for propelling the fabric he introduced a wheel, instead of the toothed bar of the Morey design.

It need hardly be said that the Singer machine is now one of the most widely known, and is turned out in countless numbers in enormous factories on both sides of the Atlantic. It is not so well known, perhaps, that Singer, who was a humble millwright in 1850, and who died in 1875, left an estate valued at three millions sterling—all amassed in less than twenty-five years!

The machines of Howe, Wilson, and Singer were on the lock-stitch principle, and the next novelty was the invention of Grover and Baker, who brought out a machine working with two needles and two continuous threads. After this came the Gibbs machine, the story of which may be briefly told.

About the year 1855, James G. Gibbs heard of the Grover and Baker machine, and having a turn for mechanics, began to ponder over how the action described was produced. He got an illustration, but could make nothing of it, and not for a year did he obtain sight of a Singer machine at work. As in the case of Singer with Wilson's machine, so Gibbs thought he could improve on Singer's, and turn out one less ponderous and complicated. He set to work, and in a very short time took out a patent for a new lock-stitch machine. But he was not satisfied with this, and experimented away, with an idea of making a chain-stitch by means of a revolving looper. This idea he eventually put into practical form, and took out a patent for the first chain-stitch sewing-machine.

Since the days of Elias Howe, the number of patents taken out for sewing-machines has been legion—certainly not less than one thousand—and probably no labour-saving appliance has received more attention at the hands both of inventors and of the general public. There is scarcely a household in the land now, however humble, without a sewing-machine of some sort, and in factories and warehouses they are to be numbered by the thousand. Some machinists have directed their ingenuity to the reduction of wear and tear, others to the reduction of noise, others to acceleration of speed, others to appliances for supplying the machine in a variety of ways, others for adapting it to various complicated processes of stitching and embroidering. Some users prefer

the lock-stitch and some the chain-stitch principle, and each system has its peculiar advantages according to the character of the work to be sewn.

The latest development is a combination of both principles in one machine. Some two or three years ago, Mr Edward Kohler patented a machine which will produce either a lock-stitch or a chain-stitch, as may be desired, and an embroidery stitch as well. By a very ingenious contrivance the machinery is altered by the simple movement of a button, and (when the chain-stitch is required) the taking out of the bobbin from the shuttle. If the embroidery stitch is wanted, the button is turned without removing the bobbin, and the lock-stitch and chain-stitch are combined in one new stitch, with which very elaborate effects can be produced. It is said that the Kohler principle can be easily adapted to all, or most, existing machines.

With this latest development from the ingenious idea of Thomas Saint, one hundred years ago, we leave the story of the sewing-machine, merely adding, in conclusion, that about two and a half million sewing-machines are turned out by the factories annually, and the demand for them increases year after year.

THE MYSTERY OF THE GOLDEN LLAMA.

CHAPTER III.—THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY.

In due course there was an inquest upon the body of Juan Almirez. Mrs Placer, the doctor whom she had summoned and who had attended within a few minutes of my discovery of the body, and myself were the only witnesses. I repeated what I knew of the history of the dead man, deposed to the fact of his dining out on the night previous to his death with some scientific friends, and related (so far as I was able) the circumstances of his coming in a few minutes before midnight and going up-stairs to his room. He was not, to my knowledge, in any difficulties or embarrassment. On the contrary, he had always appeared to be of a peculiarly cheerful temperament and in easy pecuniary circumstances. I recalled the details of his lively conversation with me two days before his death, when he had discussed his plans for the future and made the appointment with me for the night of the twenty-second. In answer to a question put to me by one of the jury, I was quite certain that he was alone when I heard him come in and go up-stairs. If there had been any one with him I should undoubtedly have noticed the sound of the additional footsteps. That concluded my examination. Mrs Placer's evidence, which followed, was mainly formal. The doctor deposed that the appearances of the body were consistent with poisoning by chloroform. Death had probably taken place about an hour or an hour and a half before he saw the deceased. It was impossible, however, to say with certainty when the fatal dose had been taken, as the deceased would no doubt lie in a state of stupor for many hours before death ensued. Taking into consideration the reported cases on the subject and the probable quantity of chloroform that had been swallowed, he should imagine that the poison must have been taken very shortly after midnight, if not still earlier. He did not think it possible that the chloroform could have been administered to the deceased against his will. It was conceivable that he might have taken it accidentally—as, for instance, if he had been in a state of intoxication at the time. Upon the whole, however, he had no hesitation in saying that he believed it to be a case of suicide.

The inquest was then adjourned, in order that the police might make inquiries for the relations of the deceased and ascertain with whom he dined on the night immediately before his death.

On its resumption it appeared that the history which Almirez had related to me was substantially correct. He was well known as a traveller and a man of science. His books, published from time to time, had attracted considerable attention. At the same time he would seem to have been a man who had made but few friends; and apparently he had no living relations, either in Ecuador or in Europe. Further, the police reported that they had been utterly unable to discover of whom the party of gentlemen who had entertained Almirez at dinner had consisted, or where any such dinner had taken place. On the other hand, a waiter at a Soho restaurant had been met with who strongly believed Almirez to have been a man who had dined at one of his tables on the night of the twenty-first, sat there smoking for some little time afterwards, and finally left about eight o'clock, after making inquiries as to the pieces which were being performed at the neighbouring theatres. The witness had taken particular notice of the gentleman, he said, because he seemed in such good humour and remembered the waiter so handsomely.

This strange piece of evidence (which I, for one, had no doubt was based upon a mistake of identity) concluded the investigation; and the jury, after a somewhat lengthy deliberation, returned a verdict to the effect that the deceased had committed suicide, but that there was no evidence on which they could determine his state of mind at the time of the occurrence.

During the interval of the adjournment an incident had occurred as to which I cannot but express my deep regret at the course which I was tempted to take. It must be remembered in my extenuation that I was suffering severely at the time from the shock of Almirez' death; but I feel only too keenly how inadequate an excuse that must seem for conduct which (I must confess) was prompted for the most part by motives of sheer cowardice. How terrible a punishment my weakness must surely have brought upon me, but for the action of another person, will appear hereafter.

Immediately after Almirez' death a will had been discovered among his papers, dated a few months back, and appointing as his executors a certain well-known scientist and myself. By this will he devoted the whole of his property, his collections, and his unpublished manuscripts in specified shares to various museums and other

scientific institutions. It was during the examination of Almirez' belongings, with a view to the settlement of this distribution, that my co-executor came across the box containing the golden llama. Some one—I know not whom—had readjusted the lid, and inside the box there still lay the card which Almirez had placed there when he gave it into my hands: 'For my dear and valued friend Angus Macpherson. A farewell gift.' My colleague instantly showed it to me, with the remark that poor Almirez had evidently desired to make me a parting present—a strong proof, he said, that his death had been premeditated. In that instant I took the step which I do not attempt to defend. I felt that it was impossible for me to explain the true state of the facts; I shrank shamefacedly from a confession of my weakness on that night; moreover, I really desired to have something that had belonged to my dead friend, and argued that it could do no harm to retake that which he had already given to me. With hardly a compunction I accepted that view of the situation which was presented to me, and acknowledged that it did seem exceedingly probable that Almirez had wished me to have the golden llama. In that same hour I again became its possessor.

I will say in justice to myself that it was not long before I became keenly sensible of the wrong that I had done in concealing my original renunciation of the gift; but it was too late then to explain the matter. As time wore on, moreover, I began to consider that, reprehensible as my conduct had certainly been, no great harm could come of it after all. I conceived a great fancy for the little squat image; I liked to have it on the table in front of me when I wrote; my unreasoning terror of it was a thing of the past; more than all, it reminded me of the dead man whom I had so dearly esteemed. And so nearly a year passed away from that night when Almirez had taken his own life; and meanwhile I worked hard and profited (I trust) by my opportunities, and began to advance a little at last in the exercise of my calling.

It was about three weeks before the anniversary of Almirez' death, so far as I can remember, that I became conscious of a relapse into low spirits. I fell into a habit of dwelling by day upon the mystery of his death, dreaming of the livid dead face, as it lay back, sunken among the scarlet cushions, with painful iteration during the livelong hours of the night, recalling to myself again and again with horrible distinctness the details of that dreadful day. It was in vain that I laughed at my nervous folly; it was in vain that I tried to smother the vague dread with which I looked forward to the twenty-first day of March. At length—about the middle of the month—I decided to try the effect of a change of my surroundings; and, telling Mrs Placer that she might expect me back again in a fortnight's time, I shifted my quarters to apartments in a quiet street in Kennington, where the broad roll of the misty river and a couple of miles of jostling house-tops lay between me and the scene of Juan Almirez' death.

There could be no doubt about the benefit that was wrought in me by the change. In one respect alone I regretted it—and that respect the character of my landlady. Miss M'Rae was as slovenly as Mrs Placer had been neat; as untrustworthy as Mrs Placer had been honest; as habitually intoxicated as Mrs Placer had been rigidly sober. It took me but little time to discover these characteristics. Under other circumstances I should probably have changed my lodgings yet once more; but, as it was, I decided to remain in my present quarters until the end of my fortnight's seclusion.

All went well with me till within two or three days of the twenty-first. Then my old unreasoning terrors began to return to me. Still I was able to keep them within bounds, and it was with tolerable easiness of mind that I awaited the recurrence of the fatal day. I had determined how I should employ it. I was going to take a long country walk, to distract my thoughts by exercise, by the moving scenery, by the freshness and sweetness of the earth in its spring-time. I was going to tire myself out, to creep home to Kennington at the close of the day, and to rise the next morning with all my follies and my fancies shaken out of me, and my faculties braced up to encounter a fresh day's work. Such was the resolve that I had formed.

The day turned out to be all that I could desire. As I strode through the crowded streets that led towards the suburban rusticity of southern London, the sun was shining brightly in a limpid, cloudless sky, the morning air was crisp, and pure, and livening. As I entered at last into the solitude of the green fields and windy commons that the builder's hand had not then reached, all Nature seemed joyous with the promise of approaching summer. The birds were twittering gaily from the trees, the fair green buds were bursting from their sheaths, the air was filled with an indefinable sense of life and growth and hopefulness. Confronted by such scenes, my despondency could not but yield. How many miles I walked that day I dare not say; I have only a vague idea that for hour after hour I tramped along, luxuriating in the brisk exercise and unwonted freedom, and that it was only when the sun was already low in the pale sky, and the smoke-dome of London hung like a tiny distant cloud, that at last, after a hearty meal at a wayside inn, I turned my steps towards home. My expedient had proved completely successful, and I felt not a little self-satisfied in having mastered my foolish forebodings. True, as twilight fell on the broad white road, and the chilly wind of evening rose and swept over the bare fields, I experienced some slight return of my uneasiness; but it quickly passed away, and, when I drew once more within the region of the gas-lit streets, I was feeling only the comfortable exultation of a man who is well satisfied with his day's work.

It was past ten o'clock when I reached the door of my lodgings. I had stopped on the outskirts of London to get some supper; and my intention was to go straight to bed—for I was very tired—and so sleep off the effects of my long walk.

I was stumbling up the narrow stairs, which

were but dimly lighted by the gas-jet above the street-door, when I almost fell against the figure of Miss M'Rae. She was standing back in the darkest corner of the staircase, where it turned abruptly to the right—standing back so motionless and so close against the wall, that it seemed strangely as though she had wished me to pass her unnoticed in the shadow. As I paused momentarily before passing on, she moved out somewhat into the light that fell from the flickering gas-jet, and I saw that her face was flushed and puffy. There was an odd look, half of fear and half of insolence, in her shifting eyes. Miss M'Rae had been drinking.

I had already passed her on the stairs when she spoke to me.

'I was just going to step out round the corner, to get a bit of something for breakfast,' she said thickly, 'if you don't mind being left alone in the 'ouse.'

The maid-of-all-work slept at her own home, a few streets distant.

'Very well, Miss M'Rae,' I answered. 'Don't be longer than you can help. I am going straight to bed now. I shan't sit up.'

She made no answer, but her eyes followed me up the staircase. My last impression, as I shut the door of my bedroom, was of a sodden face turned upwards in the gas-light and of those drunken eyes watching me to my room.

. . . . .

It seemed to me that I had slept but a few minutes, when I was awakened by a loud and continuous knocking at the street-door. Evidently Miss M'Rae had loitered on her errand; and it became my duty to go down-stairs and see who the imperious visitor might be. I must confess, however, that the duty was so repugnant to me that I waited for some minutes before I stirred, hoping in vain that I should hear the rattle of Miss M'Rae's key in the keyhole and the husky tones of Miss M'Rae's voice speaking in the hall below. At last, as the knocking became more and more persistent, I tumbled wrathfully out of bed, and huddled on a portion of my clothes. What was my surprise, when I glanced at my watch before leaving the room, to see that it was nearly two o'clock! Miss M'Rae must have been gone for close upon four hours.

A gruff voice saluted me as I opened the street-door, and a draught of cold air ran up the passage.

'Well, I 'ope I've been kept long enough standing here?' the voice said. ''Eavy sleepers, seemingly, in this 'ouse?'

'Who are you?' I demanded, somewhat savagely, for I certainly thought the grievance was not wholly on his side.

'Does a party of the name of M'Rae live here?' the voice went on, without heeding my question.

In the same instant, however, the owner of the voice answered it satisfactorily by stepping into the doorway, where I could see him more distinctly. It was a constable.

'Yes,' I said, 'Miss M'Rae lives here. What do you want with her?'

'Nothing with 'er, sir,' the man replied more civilly. 'We only wanted to find out if the address was correct. That's all.—Might I ask who you are, sir?'

'Certainly,' I said, and I told him my name. 'I am lodging here,' I added. 'Miss M'Rae is the landlady.'

'Oh, indeed, sir?—Then I think as 'ow you'll 'ave to look out for new lodgings in the morning.'

The man's impudence astounded me. 'Why?' I said shortly.

'Because the party of the name of M'Rae 'as gone and drowned herself,' he answered.

'Drowned herself?'

'Yes, sir, drowned herself!—Was seen 'anging about Vauxhall Bridge shortly after eleven-thirty P.M. in a state of intoxication. Was cautioned, and told to go 'ome. Shortly after, a splash was 'eard, and on a boat being put off, the body was recovered. The address here was found on 'er.—I'll be coming round again in the morning,' he added after a pause, as he turned away from the door. 'Good-night, sir.'

'Good-night.'

What was there in these awful midnight hours of the twenty-first of March that was fatal to those around me? Was it a mere coincidence? If not, what direful agency was at work? Asking myself these questions, I staggered up the stairs and wandered into my study. Sleep was banished from my eyes for that night at any rate. I felt unnaturally, horribly wide-awake. Mechanically I lit the gas, and sat down at my writing-table. As I did so, my eyes fell on something that was unfamiliar—a blank space at the corner of the table where my letter-weight had stood. *The golden llama was gone.*

A WESTERN TOWN.

THE phenomenal growth of towns and cities in the 'Great West' has for over a decade been everywhere a fruitful source of wonderment and discussion. It is certainly an astonishing fact, especially to the inhabitants of older and more settled countries, that regions hitherto unknown can within a few years be brought inside the sphere of advanced civilisation; and the existence of towns made possible by the extraordinary development of the surrounding resources.

The obstacles to city-building in a new and little known country are evidently many and embarrassing; and were it not that the projectors were men of iron will and strong determination, their efforts would be completely nullified. Chief among the difficulties to be surmounted are rough and impassable country, dense forests, rushing rivers, complete isolation, reckless citizens, absence of law, scarcity of provisions, and no facilities of traffic. These and kindred difficulties almost insuperable must all be met, and are; proving more eloquent than words the perseverance and 'grit' of the Western pioneer.

So many sudden transitions from primeval solitude to commercial activity have occurred in the West, that to relate half of them would

require a volume, and damage perhaps the reputation for veracity of the writer. For the purpose, then, of describing the conditions of Western life and towns, let the history of the town of Kaslo, British Columbia, suffice as a fair sample of the remainder.

Where the city of Kaslo now stands, five years ago was a piece of gently rising alluvial deposit at the mouth of a river, undisturbed by anything but the call of the native Indian, or the splash of the land-locked salmon in the lake before it. Now, it is a duly incorporated city, with mayor, aldermen, and letters-patent; and, what is more important, the natural shipping-point for the rich ores of the contiguous mining country.

In the autumn of 1890, an enterprising millwright, attracted by the beautiful position of the site of Kaslo, settled on the ground as a 'pre-emptor' or first holder. A year after began the first 'excitement' which led to the establishment of Kaslo as a place of trade. This was the discovery of the 'Noble Five,' 'Payne,' and 'Washington' mines. These 'finds' were so very rich in silver and lead that the reports of them which went abroad were at first received with incredulity. There were not wanting, however, men of daring who determined to enter the then *terra incognita*, and see for themselves if the country was as rich as reported. They returned to their homes, verified the news, and made immediate preparations to remove to the new Eldorado, as the camp was commonly called, in the somewhat extravagant language of the West.

So anxious now did men become to secure a 'mining claim' or piece of mineral ground, that 'claims' were 'staked' upon the surface of the seven feet of snow which covered the much-prized ground. A regular mining 'fever' had now set in; and in the spring of 1892 over a thousand hardy 'prospectors' were in the mountains around Kaslo picking and peering for hidden wealth.

Up to this time, one house—that of the first holder—and a few small log cabins were the only places of abode in the newly established town site. But now, merchants, hotel-keepers, and others flocked to the place, and a scene of active bustle commenced. At this stage it was visited by 'capitalists,' who purchased blocks of city 'real estate,' and secured control and interests in the best mining properties. This of course marked the place and its mines as the seat of secure investment; consequently, it grew and prospered. In October of that year (1892), a newspaper, its first edition coming out on silk, appeared, an event which was immediately followed by the construction of a wagon-road to the mines.

The history of the town from then until the acute stage of the silver crisis was reached, was one of steady growth and expansion; the building of houses and places of business being only limited by the supply of 'lumber.' It should be stated that in the West, all buildings, except in large cities, are built of timber, or 'lumber' as it is locally termed. The town was now in the zenith of its glory, and day by day its population was augmented by hundreds, brought upon steamboats from the nearest railway point. The streets were thronged with people, while the air was resonant with a never-ending din of hammer, plane, and saw. The tents pitched on all sides resembled those of an army, and over every camp-fire the merits of the new town and country were eagerly discussed.

Within two years of the founding of Kaslo, there were within its confines sixteen licensed hotels and three public boarding-houses; two large 'dry goods' or drapers' 'stores;' four general merchants', one hardwareman's, three grocers', and two furnishers' places of business; two 'tinners,' three tailors, five bakers, and one brewer, two jewellers, two butchers, four lawyers, two chemists, and two doctors; two newspapers, one bank, one powder-factory, and a telephone and telegraph system. Besides were numerous other places of business not necessary to mention, and three thousand five hundred persons drawn from everywhere. Never before was seen such an orderly, well-conducted mining town, for it was on British soil, and British law must be respected.

Like a bolt from the blue came now the closing of the Indian mints to silver, as a consequence of the repeal of the Bland and Sherman Acts in the United States. This gave such a shock to the currency all the world over, that silver went still lower than it already was, and almost immediately the effect was felt in Kaslo. Here things at once assumed a serious aspect, and many became so disheartened in this most wonderful of silver 'camps,' that the population, hitherto so rapidly and recklessly rising, began steadily and sadly sinking.

Misfortunes, it is said, never come alone, and the worst had yet to come to Kaslo. The tide had turned, and its star was now in the descendent. On the 26th of February 1894 a great fire consumed, despite the desperate efforts of its citizens, over half the business portion of the town. But this was not all. On the 3d day of June following, a fearful visitation of storm and flood destroyed some forty more houses and homes. The cup was now full, and the town, by the faint-hearted, pronounced doomed.

As steadily as the tide of immigration had streamed in, so steadily did the emigration flow out, until at the present time are left but five hundred men and women. These, with true Anglo-Saxon perseverance, are steadily surmounting every obstacle and commencing anew the task of town-making. As a reward for their tenacity, while unremunerative properties in the U.S.A. have closed, which will tend to equalise the supply and demand, their adjacent mines have been found so extremely rich that they can still be worked with a small profit, at the present extremely low price of silver.

To illustrate the sudden transitions from silence to sound, from development to decay, that occur in the West, and prove how closely the conditions of life, even at such a distance,

are interwoven and in touch with the institutions and policy of the mother-country, no better example could be given than the history of the town of Kaslo.

GREEN RUSHES, O!

By S. Baring-Gould.

Young people—the rule is all but invariable—run together like globules of quicksilver. There is so much mercury in their veins, gravitation is so fundamental a law of nature. The difficulty is to keep them apart, not to bring them together.

But human nature is capricious. There is no hard and fast rule with that; whatever general law may be thought to govern it, exceptions will be found, and among these phenomena—these deviations from the norm—were Tom and Jenny.

These were just the two who would not and could not be brought together. Their natural instincts, not inclinations, drove them apart, and not all the efforts of well-meaning friends and relatives, not all the thrusting and nudging in the world, appeared likely to give the impulse to these two to make them come together as they ought, and as they wished.

There was the oddness of the situation—it lay in the last words of my last sentence. *As they wished.* Tom had the greatest admiration for Jenny, but it was so excessive that he was shy of being with her—he adored her, but from a distance; and Jenny considered that there was no young man in the universe so far as she knew it—and she knew no more of it than is comprised within the bounds of the forest of Dartmoor—no young man at all worthy of being desired, like unto Tom, but then so great was her respect for him that—she ran away from him. If the two passed on the highroad, an awkward salutation was all they accorded each other, a grunt and a slouch of one shoulder from Tom, a movement of the lips to form the words 'How do y' do, now, Tom?' from Jenny, but not the words themselves. If it should so happen that Tom saw Jenny ahead of him, walking along in the same direction, then not all the king's horses nor all the king's men could draw on Tom to hasten his steps and catch her up. On the contrary, he immediately jumped a wall, ran over a field, jumped another, made a vast loop of at least a mile, always at the run, and came out on the road again half a mile ahead of Jenny.

Now it happens that on Dartmoor there is a little church near the Dart, newly constructed, in which a curate ministers once a Sunday. Precisely because Jenny went there for her devotions, not moved by any theological differences and doctrinal scruples, Tom frequented the Bible Christian chapel. He had on one occasion been played a trick on leaving the little church. The congregation, seeing him issue from the sacred door alongside of Jenny, immediately fell apart; some hurried forward, some hung back, with the kindest sympathy possible, to allow of Tom offering his arm—at all events his company—to Jenny on their way back to the farms where they severally dwelt, and which were close to each other. But this consideration on the part of the fellow-worshippers in the church so agitated Jenny, and so alarmed Tom, that she ran and clung to the side of a farmer's wife going her way, and Tom turned tail altogether, and walked to Holne in a direction diametrically opposite to that which he must ultimately pursue.

There can be no question but that, as a general rule, we are all inclined to believe to be true that which we hope to be true. But there are exceptions to this rule also, and precisely Tom and Jenny proved exceptions. What was obvious to every one else, what was certain to every one else, was precisely that on which each was sceptical. All the neighbours knew that Tom was madly in love with Jenny, and that Jenny could fancy no other lad than Tom; that, not to put too fine a point on it, they were cut out for each other, and for no one else. But this was what neither could be induced to believe.

There was absolutely no impediment why these two should not be joined together in holy matrimony. The banns might have been proclaimed from the tops of every tor, and no one would have forbidden them. On the contrary, they would have been hailed with acclamation. The only impediment existed in themselves; they would not come together.

Tom was an active, industrious man, a miner at Vitifer, who came up out of the shaft, red and rosy in garb as well as in face from the tin ore; he earned his sixteen shillings a week, and had a little cabin of his father's construction in which he lived with his sister, near the King's Oven, where in ancient days the tin was run into blocks and stamped with the royal mark.

Jenny was the last remaining maiden in a wooden barrack erected by the proprietor of the Vitifer mine, about which barrack a word must be said. When a new lease had been taken of the tin rights at the head of the Wibburn, then a long shanty of wood, tarred black, had been erected by the manager, who had considered that girls might very well be employed in sorting ore. He had engaged a dozen and a half, and had lodged them in this shanty under the supervision of a respectable matron. But the scheme broke down, because human blood is of the nature of quicksilver; the miners and the maids ran together and made pairs, and there were marriages one after another, till, within a twelvemonth the shanty was cleared of all the lasses except Jenny; and the matron had no other work to do than look after Jenny, who of all girls least needed looking after, for she ran away from the only man for whom she cared, yet not half so fast as he did from her.

Now Tom's sister was impatient to get away. She did not love the life on the moor; she desired above all things to take a situation in Torquay, which is as lively a place as invalids can make it; and consumptive people have more craving for excitement and amusement of every kind than those who ought to be kept from it. Such is human nature.

The frolicsome invalids who frequent Torquay have made it a very elysium for house and parlour maids; and Tom's sister had before her the golden dream of a lively winter at Torquay, and a sleepy summer there, when the invalids are departed, and the servants have nothing else to do than disport themselves on parade and lounge, and to boat and carry on with the boatmen and railway porters.

Moreover, the matron at the shanty was impatient. The manager of the Vitifer mine was impatient. The former desired to be in some prospering concern, and not a failing one like the barrack for maidens; and the latter did not see the advantage of paying and maintaining one whole matron, with expensive respectability, for the sake of one girl alone.

Consequently, it would oblige and relieve three persons if only Tom and Jenny would come together. But they were willing and prompt to do—just anything but that.

Jenny was an orphan; had no one to consult but herself. Tom was without parents; he had no one to consult but himself. 'Why the dickens should they not make a match of it?' every one asked; but no one could give an answer, except the captain of the mine, who, quoting Artemus Ward, said: 'It's downright sheer cussedness and nothink else.'

What on earth prevented Tom and Jenny from speaking to each other right out of their hearts? Precisely because each felt so strange in his or her soul, or heart, or mind, or all three together, that neither quite knew what was the matter. Only now and then, on the still moor, when the sun was shining, and the blue shadows—blue as cobalt—lay motionless on the distant hills, and Tom had stolen away from his mates to eat his dinner alone in the heather, did he lean his head in his hand and say: 'Darn it all, I can't get her out of my mind.'

And only when Jenny went to her bed, and laid her head on her pillow, did she sigh out to herself: 'Oh dear! I do like Tom tremendous!'

Each took the most elaborate precautions to conceal from other eyes what was in theirs. Neither mentioned the other's name, and if a third spoke it out, then Tom or Jenny, whichever it was who heard the other spoken of, had a flutter of the heart, and a colour in the cheek, and looked away from the speaker, as if what was said did not interest at all, and yet listened with both ears. This went on for a whole year, and each confidently believed that no one had the smallest conception of the love that consumed each heart. But it was perhaps that each rather overdid it that every one came to know of it.

Then, at once, all set to work to bring the two lovers together. Most earnest in her endeavours was Joanna, the sister of Tom. At one time she had disliked Jenny for no particular reason, but now she cultivated her acquaintance, invited her to the cottage, walked with her, and wormed her way into her affections. Then all at once out popped the words: 'I say, Jenny, you are cruel fond of my brother Tom, baint you now?'

'I—I—I—— Get along!' answered Jenny, flushing to the temples.

'You need not deny it,' said Joanna; 'I have eyes as well as another, and I can see it as distinct as I can the rocks on old Bellever Tor. You 're terrible took up wi' my brother Tom.'

'It baint true,' answered Jenny, the tears of vexation filling her eyes. 'It's a scandal to say such drashy stuff.'

'It is true; and what I know also is, that Tom worships the very ground you tread.'

'That 's false,' answered Jenny; 'for he rins away from me wheniver he sees me, jist for all the world as if I were a long-cripple [viper].'

'He does love you, I vow and protest.'

'He's got a queer way o' showing it, then,' retorted Jenny, and that was, Joanna was fain to admit it to herself, an unanswerable argument against her proposition.

After this conversation Jenny kept away from Joanna; their friendship had had a douche of cold water thrown on it, and she would neither walk with her nor salute her. As she said to the matron, Joanna had insulted her.

After a lapse of three weeks matters were patched up between them, and Joanna again broached the subject. Again Jenny refused to be convinced. As she said to herself: 'What am I? I'm naught but a poor maid that ha'n't got no belongings. I've been left behind when all the other maidens got married, 'cos none would have me; and there is Tom, as straight and stiff a chap as any in the works, and has laid by a lot o' money, folks say—and there aren't one of the mining boys as has married is fit to hold a candle to him. Git along with yourself for an idjot, Jenny, for thinkin' he can care a fardin' for you.'

Joanna also attacked her brother. 'Tom,' said she, 'here am I slavin' as a nigger, and all for no wages but pure love, and, as you know very well, I want to be off into service to Torquay. You are holding me here on to this desolate moor, where one sees no faces lookin' in at the winder but that of a bullock or a sheep or a Dartmoor colt, and I wants to be off—terrible. You 're aged twenty-seven, and ought to be married, a great hulkin' chap like you. If you'd the feelins of a man, you'd die o' shame!'

'Shame at what, Jonah?' He called her Jonah as the short for Joanna.

'A chap o' twenty-seven and not married! I say it's reg'lar scandalous; and all the county cries shame on you.'

'But who'd have me?'

'Why—bless the boy!—Jenny.'

Then Tom turned away from his sister, and went out to wash himself of the pink soil that was on his hands from the tin mine; and as he washed he said to himself: 'Jenny have me! The prettiest, tidiest, peartest [liveliest] maiden was iver seen since Eve! A chap like me—

all mucky with chrome and clay. Git along for an idjot, Tom, for thinking such things.'

This did not answer. Then the manager of the Vitifer mine took the matter in hand; so did the matron of the shanty. The master said to one of the miners who was single: 'Bill Hawk, I wish you'd do me a favour, and I'll give you five bob.'

'Yes, sir; what is it?'

'Look here, Bill; I want you to walk out that girl Jenny, gallivant with her a bit, and'——

'But, sir, I'm taking on with Mary Bolt, down to Chagford.'

'Never mind—only just for a bit. There is that confounded fool Tom won't see that he must have Jenny; and if we can make him jealous, it might work.'

Bill Hawk considered a moment and said: 'Well, sir, if Mary Bolt was to hear on it, she'd be in a dowse of a rampage; but if you'll make it seven and six, I'll try it on.'

'I don't object to another half-crown, Bill. So be it.'

On her part the matron invited a niece to the barrack, a very lively, dark-eyed witch of a girl, and she brought her over to the cottage of Joanna, who at once took to her and contrived means of throwing her and Tom together, and the matron and her niece talked much of Tom and his nice cottage, and his garden, and his savings before Jenny. But this also failed. Jenny would not be walked out by Bill Hawk, would not say a word to him; and the niece had not a chance with Tom, who, if he saw her in the cottage, made a run, and went off elsewhere. So passed another year. The matron had given notice, and the barrack was to be closed, Jenny would be obliged to shift for herself, and whither should she go? Joanna had become desperate, pining for the frolics of Torquay, and had announced to her brother that she had engaged herself in a situation, and that he must shift for himself; she was not going to be an 'exile of Siberia,' not for him nor any one—not another winter. If he wouldn't marry——

'Then I must take a housekeeper,' said Tom.

His sister stood back aghast.

'A housekeeper! You, an unmarried man! A housekeeper! Goodness gracious me! what is the world coming to?'

'If she's old and ugly,' protested Tom.

'No woman does think herself old and ugly. She will lay traps and snap you up. Goodness gracious me! Here's a fine kettle of fish!'

'What else can I do?' asked Tom despairingly.

'Marry,' answered Joanna.

'It takes two to do that,' said Tom disconsolately.

'Yes, of course it does. It doesn't take three, nor four, nor half-a-dozen, but two only. Go and speak to Jenny.'

'She runs away from me.'

'Run after her.'

Tom shook his head and walked away.

'Tom,' said the captain of the Vitifer mine, 'I want you to do a job for me to-day.'

'What's that, cap'n?'

'We must have the shed thatched afore the fall-rains come on, and I've borrowed Potter's wagon. I want you to go up by Cranmere and get me rushes, green rushes, to have it properly roofed in. It ought to have been done last year, but there were other things coming on, and there had been such a lot of rain that the bogs were well-nigh impassable. But this year we have had such drith [dryness] that you can get out a long way. Potter can't let us have a man, but we are welcome to the wagon.'

'Yes, sir, I'll do it. But I must have some one with me to load.'

'I know. Potter will let us have Joe Leaman, the boy; he'll do, I suppose.'

'Oh yes; any boy, or girl either, would do for that. It is only to pack the rushes in the cart as I chuck 'em up.'

'Very well, take Joe.'

Accordingly, that day—a lovely day it was—Tom went to the farm and got the cart, and Joe somewhat sulkily helped Tom to put the harness on. The horse—there was but one—and a wagon could never pass over the precarious and rugged track that was to be taken.

'I say,' observed Joe Leaman, 'it's Chagford fair to-day, and there's a circus, there is.'

'Well, what of that?' asked Tom.

'Why don't y' go and see the jumpin' tomahawkin' Injians, and the hostriches racin', and the piebald pony as sits at a table and smokes? I would if I was you.'

'I have my work to do, and I can't.'

'I'd cut work if I was you.'

Tom vouchsafed no answer, and drove out of the farmyard and along the track into the depths of the moor.

'Look here,' said Joe, 'I can cut along over the hill in no time, while you're going along the way.'

'Well, cut along.'

Joe disappeared. He did not, however, go over the hill, but slunk back to the few cottages near Vitifer, and came on Jenny.

'I say, Jenny, you're a good 'un, you be.'

'What do y' want now, Joe?'

'Look y' here, Jenny, I'm off to Chagford fair, and there's hostriches and jumpin' kangaroos there, and a piebald pony as drinks beer like a fish—and my master hev ordered me to load rushes out by Cranmere.'

'Then I reckon you must go.'

'No, I won't. But our cart be started, and I want some one to take my place. Do y' now, there's a honey, Jenny. I know you've a holiday, 'cos of the fair; so you can, and it ain't fair as I should be made to work, and want to be off to Chagford, and you got nothin' to do, and don't kear about fairing.'

'I'll go,' said Jenny, who was very good-natured; but she said: 'Who is with the hoss? Who's going to cut the rushes?'

'One of our chaps,' said Joe. He had that cunning in him which prompted him not to say that Tom was with the cart. He knew that, had he told the truth, Jenny would have been too shy to go. 'You're thunderin' good,' continued Joe. 'Now look here; you cut along wi' all your legs over that stretch o' moor yonder, and you'll come down on the other side upon the roadway and see our cart

wi' the grey mare, going out to the bogs about Cranmere; you can't miss it. I'll give y' a kiss and thanks, Jenny, if you like.'

'I'll have the thanks wi'out the kiss, you monkey,' said the girl; and without suspicion of deceit, away she went, singing like a lark, across the moor in the direction indicated. She went as the crow flies, whereas the cart had to go on a track that followed a valley and then turned round a long shoulder of down, strewn with hut circles belonging to an ancient settlement in a prehistoric age. She had full three miles to walk before she could expect to catch up the cart and the grey mare.

As she walked, wading through the heather, in every flush from carmine to palest lake, she sang for very joy of heart, and yet joy mingled with an indescribable yearning:

'I would I were a sparrow,
To light on every tree;
At eve, at night, and morning,
I'd flutter, love, to thee.
And as the ship went sailing,
So lightly I would fly,
And perch me on the topmast,
My true love thence to spy.

'I would I were a gold-fish,
And in the sea did swim;
At eve, at night, and morning,
I'd follow after him.
Then o'er the bulwark looking,
He'd say, "What see I there?
A fish all golden, shining,
Like a lock of my love's hair."'

She stooped—at her feet was a clump of white heath—and she picked some and put it in her bosom. To find white heath betokens luck, it is said. Having arranged her little posy, she went on singing:

'I would I were a flower,
And in a garden grew,
At eve, at night, and morning,
Whene'er my love passed through.
And if you plucked and wore me,
Upon your heart I'd lie,
And breathing forth my fragrance,
Upon your heart I'd die.'

She sang to a plaintive minor air—an air that was in itself full of tears; and as she sang, the sad words of the sad melody took the brightness from her mood and left a longing inarticulate therein. She surmounted the hill and saw the white mare gleam in the sun and the flash of the scythe of the reaper who was to cut the rushes. Who he was she could not discern, as he was on the farther side of the cart.

She hastened her steps. She ceased singing, as she had not the breath for it now. Presently she came up with the cart, and, still not seeing who was on the farther side, said: 'Joe has gone to the fair, and I've told him—little monkey—I'd take his place. Is that you, Simon Jeffries?'

Then Tom looked up and across the cart, and Jenny started back in dismay; but so also did Tom.

Tom was angry; he thought a trick had been played on him. Jenny was ashamed; she thought Tom would consider her pert, forward.

So they walked along, one on each side of the cart, neither speaking.

That was a long, tedious journey. The cart bounced about like a boat in a chopping sea. Of road there was absolutely none. The wheel on this side bounced over a great stone, then that on the other was heaved up over a hummock of turf. Wretched as the track was, it was an old one. As Tom walked along with his eyes on the ground, he saw something, stooped, and picked up a flint arrow-head—a thunderbolt, he regarded it—and put it in his pocket. To find a thunderbolt is as sure a prognostic of good-luck as to discover white heath.

At length at noon the great desolate dark waste was reached where the rushes were to be cut. Before beginning operations, Tom unharnessed the horse, and then returning to a nodule of dry peat at some little distance to the right of the stationary cart, pulled out his lunch, sat down, and began to eat.

Jenny had not brought any food with her. In the hurry of starting she had forgotten to provide herself. She withdrew to some little distance to the left of the cart, found a tuft of rushes, and sat down on that and folded her hands.

Tom had eaten the greater part of his pasty before he looked in her direction. The cart was between them, but by leaning backwards he could just see her across the back of the cart-wheels. Then he observed that she was fasting. He got up, went to the cart, and taking out a little white bag, carried it to her and said: 'Here's Joe Leaman's dinner; eat that.' Then hastily he retired to his former position, or rather to his former place, not position, for he altered the latter. Instead of sitting sideways, he turned his back on the cart, and of course thereby turned his back also on Jenny.

So he munched on. In the great desolate swamp at the spring head of the river was no pure, no potable water, but Tom had brought with him a flask of cold tea. If he had not taken this with him, what would he have done? How could he have gulped down his dry pasty?

Now turning his head over his shoulder, he looked to see what Jenny was doing for lack of water. He couldn't see, because the cart was in the way, so he came up to the cart and peeped cautiously from behind it, and saw that she was quite unable to proceed with a very dry hunch of saffron cake. After some hesitation, he took up a piece of feathery moss, wiped the mouth of his bottle, and went over to the girl, handed it to her with a—'There: pull away; 'tis tea,' and then turned and fled. Ten minutes later he stretched himself, took his scythe, and began to reap down green rushes; and as he reaped he sang:

'Don't y' go a-rushing, maids, in May,
Don't y' go a-rushing, maids, I say.
Don't y' go a-rushing,
Or you'll get a brushing,
Gather up your rushes, and go away.'

He sang defiantly, to show that he was not thinking of Jenny or of any one else.

After he had been engaged some time in

cutting, Jenny came and bound up in bundles the green rushes he had cut, but always at a considerable distance from him, and ever as he went ahead he sang out:

'Don't y' go a-rushing,
Or you 'll get a brushing,
Gather up your rushes, and go away,'

with great emphasis on the *go away*.

At last sufficient had been cut and bound to fill the cart, and then Tom harnessed the grey mare and put her in between the shafts, and drove her along to where lay the little bundles.

Then with a jerk of the chin and a sign with his thumb, Tom indicated to Jenny to get into the cart, which she would not do till she had restored to him his bottle of cold tea, in which was some still left; and of this Tom at once took a pull without wiping the mouth with moss, and then blushed up to the roots of his hair, fearing lest Jenny should have seen him and read the thoughts of his heart, that he was putting his lips where had been hers—and was happy.

All went on very silently, the loading with rushes, and the arranging them in the cart. Tom considered how many 'niches' (bundles) of rushes would be required for the thatch. He had been told, and he now took more lest the thatches should fall short and it would be necessary to come out to the mere for more.

The cart was piled up high, and on the top of the pile of green rushes sat Jenny, by her weight to hold them in place. It was true a rope was slung across, but the 'niches' were so short that it could hardly nip them all. It was necessary that some one should be in the cart to keep them in place. Then 'Gee up, old grey!' called Tom, and they started on the return journey.

All went well for some while, slow indeed, but without accident, so long as the track lay over heather and moss. But when the tracks became deeper and revealed gravel and white lumps of granite, then the oscillation was great, and the voyage attended with danger, not only to the cart, but also to its lading. All at once, down went one wheel on the side opposite to Tom, and he thought the cart and all its contents must capsize.

Quick as thought, he dived under the cart and came up on the farther side, just as the whole pile of rushes tilted over, and with it Jenny, who was on the top. Beyond, at his back, was a bog—profound—treacherous. In the terror of the moment, in his impossibility to escape, Tom remained where he was, held out his arms, and into them fell Jenny, and with her and over her and him poured the green rushes, burying them and almost smothering them.

But with a struggle, up through the rush 'niches' came the two heads of Tom and Jenny; and odd enough to relate, Jenny in her alarm had thrown her arms round Tom's neck, and Tom had Jenny fast in his arms.

'Lor' a-mussy, Jenny!' said Tom.

'Well, I never, Tom!' said Jenny.

The moor folk who had been to Chagford fair, and had seen the circus, the ostriches, the tomahawking Indians, the piebald pony that smoked a pipe and drank beer, and paid sixpence for the privilege, on their return in the evening saw a still more interesting and novel sight, for which they paid nothing. This was none other than Tom and Jenny coming off the moor walking hand in hand, talking to each other so hard that they heard not nor saw the number of people collected on the road to observe them and comment on the sight.

They had been brought together at last, and now could not have enough of each other. The rushes did it.

I knew Tom and Jenny some years later, when Tom and Jenny were no more two, but one flesh; and I never knew, nor could hear tell that they ever had any difference with each other, except over this one thing.

'You know, Jenny,' said Tom, ''twas you jumped into my arms.'

'Now, how can you, Tom!' answered Jenny. 'You went under the cart, so mad was you to catch ho'ud o' me.'

'I—it was the rushes I wor thinking on.'

'And I—I were tum'led down by the rushes.'

'Well,' said Tom—and I was told that the little altercation always concluded in this way—'well, Jenny, there was a power o' folks; there was my sister Joanna, there was that matron to the barrack, there was the cap'n—lor'! they was all of 'em on to bring us together; but they couldn't do it. What mortal men couldn't do, the green rushes did, and say I, and always will say till I dies—the Lord's blessin' be on the green rushes as grows on the moor for bringing us together—as they did.'

BETWEEN THE SIZES.

Should I have been so rudely planned
That nothing ever seems to fit,
If Nature when she took in hand
The work, had giv'n her mind to it?
My boots and hats and gloves, and all
Such things, are never ready-made;
I'm what, I fancy, they would call
'Between the sizes' in the trade.

My social views I cannot square
With those of any other school,
My politics are just as rare
And follow no existing rule;
And when my spirit's deeper needs
Cry out for comfort or control,
I search in vain among the creeds
To suit my solitary soul.

If Nature be alone to blame
That I have been constructed ill,
Must I for ever be the same
And stay 'between the sizes' still?
Or, in some happy future state
From human limitations free,
Will creeds and clothes be out of date,
And will there be a place for me?

C. J. B.

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